

Weare Open Space Committee
Minutes
August 28, 2007
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09/19/2007 7:16 AM

In attendance were: George Malette, Steve Najjar, John Ciampi, Andrea Alderman, and Pat Myers.

Chairman Najjar called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

Minutes Review: The draft minutes of July 24 were reviewed by Committee members and the following revision was made- under the heading "Update on Current Land Contacts", Steiner bullet, 1st line, change "*Pat and Andrea are slated to site walk the property...*" to "*Pat and Andrea are slated to meet for a site walk...*". Andrea made motion to accept the minutes as amended, and Pat 2nd. All voted in favor and the motion carries.

Update Membership List: Updates are still needed for Sherry Burdick and Paul Koscuizek. Discussion then ensued around how to best format the operating procedures and guidelines of the Open Space Committee. It was agreed the procedures will generally conform to those of the Conservation Commission. George raised the point that some members are not comfortable before a visual media and are certain to leave their board or not continue to be actively involved. Steve commented the reason the OSC isn't televised is because its objective is exclusively for land transactions and that further information can be procured through the minutes.

Projects in Progress: Steve indicated it would be advantageous to put names associated with certain projects in terms of responsibility.

Steiner Meeting: Pat and Andrea met with Mr. Steiner on August 2. George suggested ordering more booklets of Conserving Your Land from the Forest Society to insure an adequate supply for upcoming land conservation prospects. Steve reflected that Mr. Steiner would not need to render a current use penalty nor a real estate transfer tax if he sells his property to the Town. Steve noted the OSC has two options concerning the Steiner at this time: number one is to pay \$1000.00 to get an appraisal, or the OSC can use the tax lot information to get an evaluation on the property. Steve suggested ratcheting down the sales agreement price from the property evaluation of his assessed house lot value. Pat mentioned Mr. Steiner interest in a bargain sale, but in that case Mr. Steiner would have to provide a full blown appraisal. Steve wondered if there are enough funds to close on this property now, or, if brought before the voters, not to close until May or June, contingent on funding.

[As a sidebar in this juncture of the discussion, Steve noted that Carol Hall will be leaving her position with the Russell Foundation and is being replaced by Ian

McSweeney as the new director. Ian is also a member of the ZBA and a liaison to SNHPC.]

Steve suggested continuing negotiating with Mr. Steiner and then determining where the OSC stands with this contact. Then a Purchase and Sales Agreement can be drawn up, and again Steve emphasized “contingent on funding”. The latest this project would be executed would be May-June of next year, and the earliest, soon. But, Steve stressed, it may be better to wait longer so the available funds can be stretched further. Steve underscored the importance of this project, being located in the southern highly developed tier of Weare, and its proximity to three other conservation areas, Durgin, Brookshire, and Hoit Mill. Steve wondered if anything would be gained by having an appraisal on this property. Pat responded if there’s a bargain sale there must be an appraisal. Steve said Scott Heath would be the appraiser to the tune of \$1,000.00. George stated the OSC should move forward with an appraisal because that’s generally its policy. After some discussion, it was suggested to run this matter by Mr. Steiner and see how he wants to handle this proceeding. However, in the final determination, it was agreed to ask Mr. Heath his opinion. Steve commented there is currently funding for the Pinard and Steiner properties.

Review of Current Land Contacts:

- Bob Bailey: This appraisal will be done next week, but unfortunately the timing is a little off for the Conservation Commission meeting. Steve predicted not to expect any bargains here. Mr. Bailey’s initial request is for \$700, 000.00, and it seems he isn’t interested in conservation, but only to maximize his investment return.
- Ray Banks: John volunteered to make contact with him and line up a site walk.
- Shawn Hawkes: The hang-up here is that Shawn needs to figure out what he wants to exclude from his property so Scott can do the appraisal. It will include Rod Wilson’s land as well. Steve feels a professional land trust organization should become involved in this contact as there’s much land involved in this transaction. Rod Wilson’s property is 110 acres and is appraised for \$213,000.00. It’s hoped to be appraised by October.
- Pinard: Scott is working on this appraisal and Margaret Watkins (PWA) contacted Mr. Pinard. Steve is hopeful this land contact will have some sort of bargain element associated with it, and also to have this land put into an easement.
- Brown: Paul Doscher (SPNHF) is currently active with this land contact.
- Linda Hall: Andy Fulton (WCC) holds the reins on this land contact, which is nearing finalization.
- Mike McKevitt: John left several voice messages with him but hasn’t heard back from him.
- Fred Shattuck: Has been added to the active file. His property is on Rt. 149 near the paint ball park. He called Steve July 16. Pat volunteered to line up a site walk on his 23 acres. Across the roadway from Mr. Shattuck’s is a PWA conservation life estate owned by Betty Huse.
- Silvia Pope: She’s ready to move forward. Steve is waiting to hear back from Margaret Watkins in order to conduct a joint site walk. Steve asked Pat to

- act on this contact on behalf of the PWA. Steve hopes to continue moving forward with this once he hears back from PWA.
- Dot O'Neil: George is the mediator for this land contact. Dot contacted the OSC in July. George explained to the Committee she would have to subdivide her house independent from the conservation parcel. Steve felt the house parcel doesn't need to be subdivided; only written into the deed that it is not to be included in the conservation piece. George talked about his discussion with Dot in which he proposed to her two options- one is to place her property in an easement in which she would keep ownership, and the other is to subdivide her house from the proposed conservation piece and sell the conservation land to the Town. Dot's first approach is the easement option. George will contact Ms. O'Neil and line up a site walk date, and George will provide her with a copy of Conserving Your Land booklet which will inform Dot on the aspects of conserving her land. The assessed value of this property is \$102,000.00 including the house lot.
 - Michelle Gagnon: She called Steve from her home on Dustin tavern Rd and proposes to conserve 60 acres which was in some kind of land trust. Pat volunteered to make the initial contact.
 - Dorothy Cleves: Steve mentioned that she only sent a letter to him, sans phone number. Ms. Cleaves property is located on Cram Rd., but she currently lives in Florida. Her lot is 410/182 and she owns 50 acres in the SW corner of Weare. Steve suggested making contact with her and going from there.
 - Bruce Farr: A miscellaneous contact in which its origins are unknown. More information is pending on this.

Funding Focus: Various topics related to funding were discussed. George conveyed that between reassessment and the new school, funding from the Town could present a challenge. And the Town is currently paying on a 10 year bond for the Ferrente land. Pat maintained that although the financial picture in Weare seems dim, the OSC should keep trying to ballotize for funding each year. George suggested the key element is to educate the public at large, and therefore an informed public would more likely vote in favor of land conservation issues. Andrea wondered about how much the OSC would be asking the Town to support, to which Steve replied, "That's a very complex matter right now because it all depends on contributions from other environmental partners, final asking prices from presently considered contacts, and what some contacts ultimately want to do with their properties". Steve extended his reply by stating the Committee needs help in strategizing, determining what is and isn't realistic, and to look for other funding sources such as Fish and Game, Russell Foundation, PWA, SPNHF, and others. Andrea suggested the Committee should have a figure by November. Steve commented he feels the reason the OSC hasn't been successful with LCHIP is because of competition with larger more influential land trusts in the State which focus on larger tracts of land in the Northwest corridor of the State. Steve asked John about the NU Foundation Grant Program which recently has been endowed with \$25,000,000.00 from Northeast Utilities Corp. However, John explained, this program has not yet been fully established and is in process of conducting "listening sessions" that seeks to identify potential nonprofit community partners. John will inquire further into this matter. Another potential funding source is the Moose

Plate Grant program which has been endowed with \$188,000.00 available to successful grant seekers, and the Committee agreed this program is worth investigating. Steve mentioned he thinks it may be helpful to visit the LCHIP office in downtown Concord in order to review their files of grant proposals to get a sense of how these proposals are written and there main areas of focus.

Adjournment: John made motion to adjourn and George 2nd. All voted in favor and the motion carries.

Recorded as a True Record,

John Ciampi
Recording secretary WOSC

Cc: Files
Town Clerk
Merry Rice
BOS